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Q. Outline chronologically the process by which the US and Saudi Arabia determined that the Saudis needed AWACS (e.g., requirements for enhanced Saudi air defense, ground-based versus aerial surveillance options, E-2 versus E-3A, requirement for five E-3A).

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A. Both the US and Saudi Arabia have over the past several years come to realize the major contribution that AWACS could make to Saudi Arabia.

-- In 1979, during the period of increased regional tension caused by the outbreak of fighting between North and South Yemen, the US deployed AWACS aircraft to Saudi Arabia to improve Saudi air defenses along the borders with Yemen.

-- In February 1980 Saudi Arabia informally indicated its interest in acquiring AWACS.

-- In April 1980 the US agreed to conduct a study of Saudi air defense requirements as part of our ongoing program to strengthen the Saudi military.

-- During June 1980 meeting between SecDef Brown and Prince Sultan it was agreed that the Saudi request for AWACS would continue to be studied.

-- In September 1980, in response to the Iran/Iraq war, the US agreed to deploy AWACS aircraft to Saudi Arabia to improve its air defenses.

-- In December 1980 USAF completed its analysis of Saudi air defense needs. This study considered three options: improved ground radar only; improved ground radar plus the E2C; and improved ground radar plus AWACS. The study did not recommend a particular option, although it concluded that airborne early warning aircraft could significantly improve Saudi air defense capabilities.

-- On March 6, 1981, US announced its agreement in principle to sell airborne surveillance aircraft to Saudi Arabia.

-- During March 1981, a Saudi AF team travelled to Washington for more detailed discussions on the air surveillance options. During this period the Saudis decided that they preferred to buy the AWACS E3A aircraft.